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**STATEMENT ON THE NATION'S REPORT CARD:  
*NAEP 2011 Mathematics and Reading: Trial Urban District Assessment***

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I am honored to have the 2011 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) results of the Nation's Report Card released today here in Baltimore. I'd like to explain why participating in TUDA is so important to me—and to Baltimore City Public Schools, Maryland's only large urban public school district.

NAEP—also known as The Nation's Report Card—is the gold standard when it comes to measuring student achievement across all 50 states. It is a rigorous assessment with unassailable results, and unlike state assessments which vary from state to state, it provides an apples-to-apples comparison of students across the country. And TUDA represents a subsection of NAEP results for large urban districts. City Schools joined TUDA for the first time in 2009 because we wanted the opportunity to compare ourselves not just to other school districts in Maryland, but to our true peers—fellow big-city districts with student populations and resource challenges like ours. As a data-driven district, we also wanted access to the truest measure of how our students are doing, to better inform our work to become an entire district of great school options for our students and families. The TUDA results show us where we are making progress and where we need to focus more attention moving forward.

Today's TUDA results are a direct reflection of our reform efforts during the past two years. We have made good progress in math, where we have focused enormous efforts because it has been our weakest area, especially in the middle grades state tests: In eighth grade, the average score went up 4 points from 2009 to 2011, and in fourth grade, the average score went up 3 points over the two years, with the latter increase being statistically significant. Our TUDA reading results, meanwhile, have remained essentially flat from 2009 to 2011.

We are a school district that has focused on providing parents and students with a portfolio of improved school options. That has meant not only creating and closing schools and expanding school choice across the district; it has also meant thinking really hard about the content of our teaching and learning, about improving our practices in the classroom, and about how we, the adults in the our district, align everything we do around the needs of our students and communities. We have given our schools greater autonomy over resources; expanded opportunities in math and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), and in advanced courses and career and technical pathways; and strengthened

opportunities for professional development and advancement for all of our professionals, with one of the strongest collaborations for district improvement between the district and labor in the country. We overhauled our math curriculum in 2009, a move we have supported—and continue to support—with extensive professional learning and collaboration opportunities for teachers. We created extended learning opportunities for students, during the school year and as part of summer learning; just this month we began offering Saturday school to students who need intensive math support. We have engaged in school turnarounds that emphasize math through STEM and robotics. We have been rigorous in holding our schools accountable, while at the same time emphasizing that the entire community has to own and support what happens in schools.

So we expected to see growth in our TUDA math results. Our flat reading results are not surprising, because our efforts in literacy have been more recent, but they point the way to how much hard work we still have to do to make this the school system Baltimore City deserves. We believe that our ongoing adoption of Common Core State Standards will strengthen literacy across the district—and expand on the district's progress in math—by providing standards for all schools that are rigorous and content rich. And we expect our current focus on teacher effectiveness and the systems we are building to ensure effective instruction in every classroom to have a major impact on student achievement in reading and math in the months and years to come.

But NAEP isn't just about test scores and achievement levels. The TUDA reports also show student performance within the context of background variables—factors such as teacher practices, home environment and exposure to academics and activities outside the classroom. This contextual information sheds light on everything from how frequently teachers read aloud to students to how often families engage in conversations about schoolwork at home. The reports are gold mines of actionable, often hidden information. TUDA helps us see both the small details and the big picture.

In Baltimore in the past few years, education has been about embracing innovation and engaging every part of the city in the life of its public schools. And just as we need teachers, parents and institutional partners to contribute to our students' success, we need information like the TUDA data NAEP provides to inform our work. I urge my fellow TUDA superintendents to look not just at their scores, but to go deep with the data, use it to direct change, and share our successes and our disappointments. I also urge more big cities to become accountable, and join this effort. When it comes to improving urban education in America, we are all in this together.